

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. 1. A method for operating a portable computing device, the method comprising:
 2. coupling a signal line accessible through an outlet of the portable computing
 3. device to a communication device;
 4. detecting a signal on the signal line to determine whether the communication
 5. device is actively connected to a portable computing device; and
 6. suspending execution of at least a portion of a program, the portion of the program
 7. reducing power consumption of the portable computing device.

1. 2. The method of claim 1, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a
2. program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes
3. suspending occurrence of a timeout feature, wherein the time-out feature significantly
4. reduces power consumption of the portable computing device.

1. 3. The method of claim 2, including sending communications from the portable
2. computing device using the communication device when the communication device is
3. actively connected to the portable computing device.

1. 4. The method of claim 1, wherein coupling a signal line includes extending the
2. signal line to a pin element of a pin connector forming the outlet.

1 5. The method of claim 2, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a
2 program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes
3 selectively suspending the occurrence of the time-out feature when the communication
4 device is actively coupled.

1 6. The method of claim 2, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a
2 program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes
3 disabling the time-out feature while the communication device is actively coupled.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein detecting the signal includes measuring a voltage
2 level of the signal.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein detecting a signal from the communication device
2 includes coupling the portable computing device to the communication device using a pin
3 connector, and wherein one pin in the pin connector extends into the signal line.

1 9. The method of claim 2, including launching a program that is downloaded to the
2 portable computing device through the communication device once the occurrence of the
3 time-out feature is suspended.

1 10. The method of claim 2, including launching a program once the occurrence of the
2 time-out feature is suspended, the program providing a display selected from a group of
3 displays consisting of a world clock, a digital image stored from a digital camera device,
4 and a display of real-time information provided by a data network.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a
2 program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes
3 determining a programmable backlight of a display to be operational while the
4 communication device is coupled.

1 12. The method of claim 1, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a
2 program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes
3 programming a backlight of a display to be selectively operational while the
4 communication device is coupled.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein suspending execution of at least a portion of a
2 program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing device includes
3 programming the display to be operational when the backlight of the display is selected to
4 be operational.

1 14. The method of claim 12, including executing a program upon detecting the signal
2 on the signal line to reorganize an output arrangement of a database.

1 15. A detachable assembly, comprising:
2 a communication device; and
3 a portable computing device adapted to couple to the communication device, the
4 portable computing device including:
5 a signal line that is adapted to couple to an output node of the
6 communication device; and

7 a processor coupled to detect a signal on the signal line to determine
8 whether the communication device is actively connected to the portable computing
9 device;

10 wherein the processor is programmed to suspend execution of at least a
11 portion of a program upon detecting the communication device, the portion of the
12 program reducing power consumption of the portable computing device.

1 16. The detachable assembly of claim 15, wherein the communication device includes
2 an alternating current adapter for supplying power to the portable computing device.

1 17. The detachable assembly of claim 16, wherein the processor suspends an
2 occurrence of a timeout feature that significantly reduces power consumption by the
3 portable computing device.

1 18. The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the signal line extends to a pin
2 element of a pin connector forming the outlet.

1 19. The detachable assembly of claim 15, wherein the processor selectively suspends
2 an occurrence of the time-out feature upon the communication device actively coupling to
3 the portable computing device.

1 20. The detachable assembly of claim 15, wherein the processor disables the time-out
2 feature upon the communication device actively coupling to the portable computing
3 device.

1 21. The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the signal is a voltage level
2 provided by the output node of the communication device.

1 22. The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the portable computing device
2 couples to the communication device using a pin connector, and wherein one pin in the pin
3 connector extends into the signal line.

1 23. The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein a program is downloaded to the
2 portable computing device using the communication device once the occurrence of the
3 time-out feature is suspended.

1 24. The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the processor launches a program
2 once the occurrence of the time-out feature is suspended, the program providing a display
3 selected from a group of displays consisting of a clock, a digital image, and a display of
4 real-time information provided by a data network.

1 25. The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the processor suspends execution of
2 at least a portion of a program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing
3 device, the portion of the program providing a backlight of a display to be operational
4 while the communication device is coupled.

1 26. The detachable assembly of claim 17, wherein the processor suspends execution of
2 at least a portion of a program for reducing power consumption of the portable computing
3 device, the portion of the program providing a backlight of a display to be selectively
4 operational while the communication device is coupled.

1 27. The detachable assembly of claim 26, wherein the portion of the program provides
2 for the display to be operational when the backlight of the display is selected to be
3 operational.

1 28. The detachable assembly of claim 15, wherein the portion of the program provides
2 for reorganizing an output arrangement of a data base.

1 29. A portable computing device, comprising:
2 means for coupling a signal line accessible through an outlet of the portable
3 computer device to a communication device;
4 means for detecting a signal on the signal line to determine whether the
5 communication device is actively connected to a portable computing device; and
6 means for suspending execution of at least a portion of a program, the portion of
7 the program reducing power consumption of the portable computing device.